

ECOLOGICAL LAND USE PLANNING AND THE NEED OF EIA FOR LOCAL USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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The experience of Ecological Land Use Planning in Baja California shows that in order to achieve protection goals it is necessary to introduce user-friendly methodologies to conduct micro EIAs for domestic and small scale uses of nature

KEY CONCEPTS

ECOLOGICAL LAND USE PLAN: a policy instrument used in Mexico mostly at the state level to regulate the future use of the territory to solve the conflict between land use potential base on the ecological attributes and the actual or future use that may emerge considering the development patterns observed in the state.

TERRITORIAL UNITS: The different parts of the territory that share enough ecological characteristics to be identified in the plan as a homogeneous region subject to a particular land use policy according to the protection goals of the plan.

LAND USE POLICIES: The different policies used in the plan for every particular territorial unit. They can go from conservation to development with particular land use recommendations.

ECOLOGICALLY PROTECTED ZONE: A zone where all uses of natural resources are virtually prohibited, including the use for local communities who were in the area before the zone was declared as protected zone.

Why we need to coordinate Ecological Land Use Planning and EIA?

One of the major drawbacks of comprehensive ecological land use planning is that it imposes a heavy weight of the protection measures to local communities and families living within or nearby the ecologically protected zones.

Once enacted an ecological land use plan leaves both small local users of natures services and large project developers subject to almost similar regulation

In many occasions this situation produces less cooperation from local communities than needed to achieve the large goals of ecological land use planning..

The revision and updating process of the State Ecological Land Use Plan conducted in Baja California suggest the need to introduce a user friendly methodology to conduct micro EIAs for domestic and small scale local uses of nature within the framework of comprehensive ecological land use plans and how to use this possibility as incentive for local communities to cooperate in environmental protection and ecological land use plan implementation.

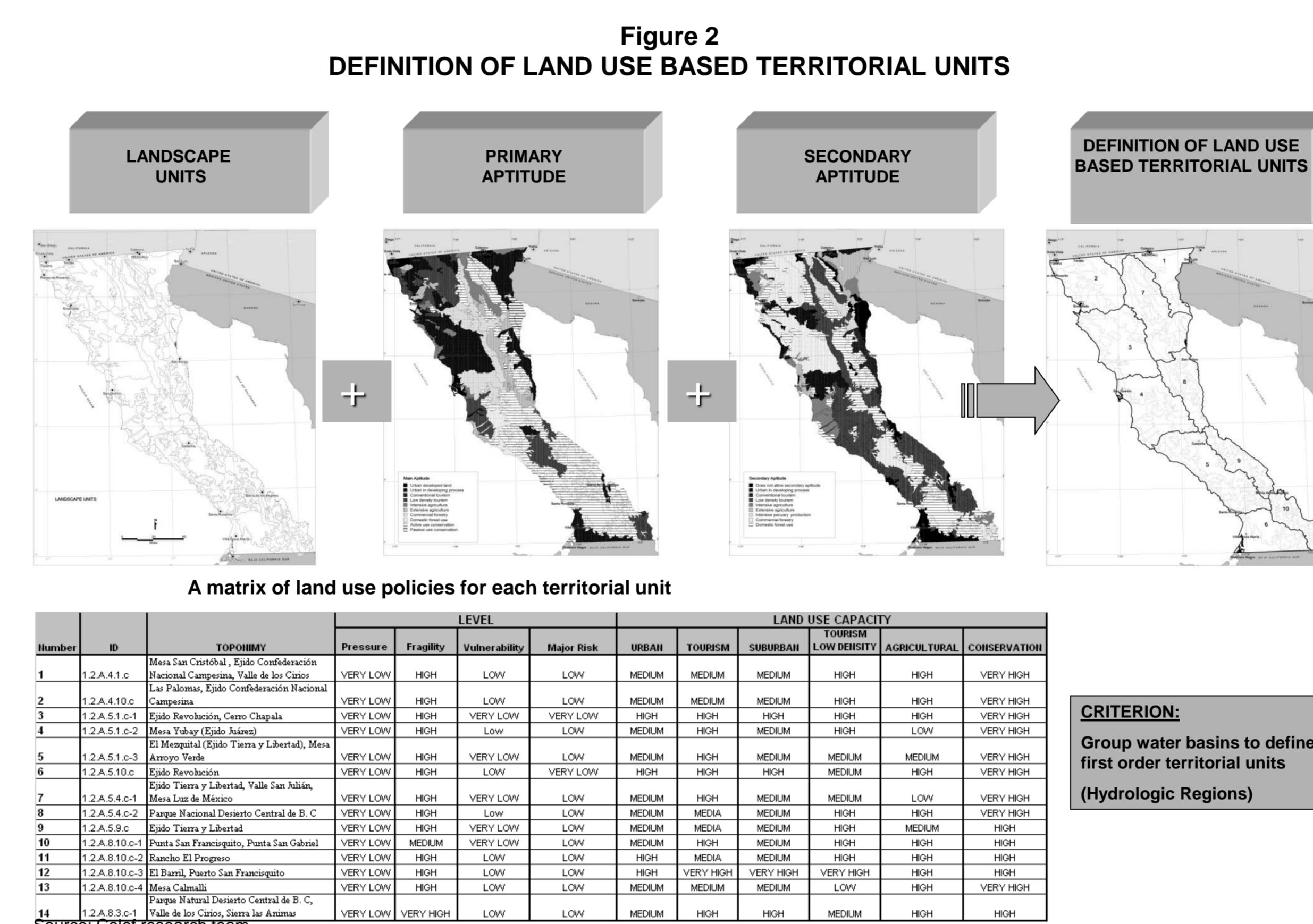


TABLE 1
Land use allocation by general policy and territorial coverage

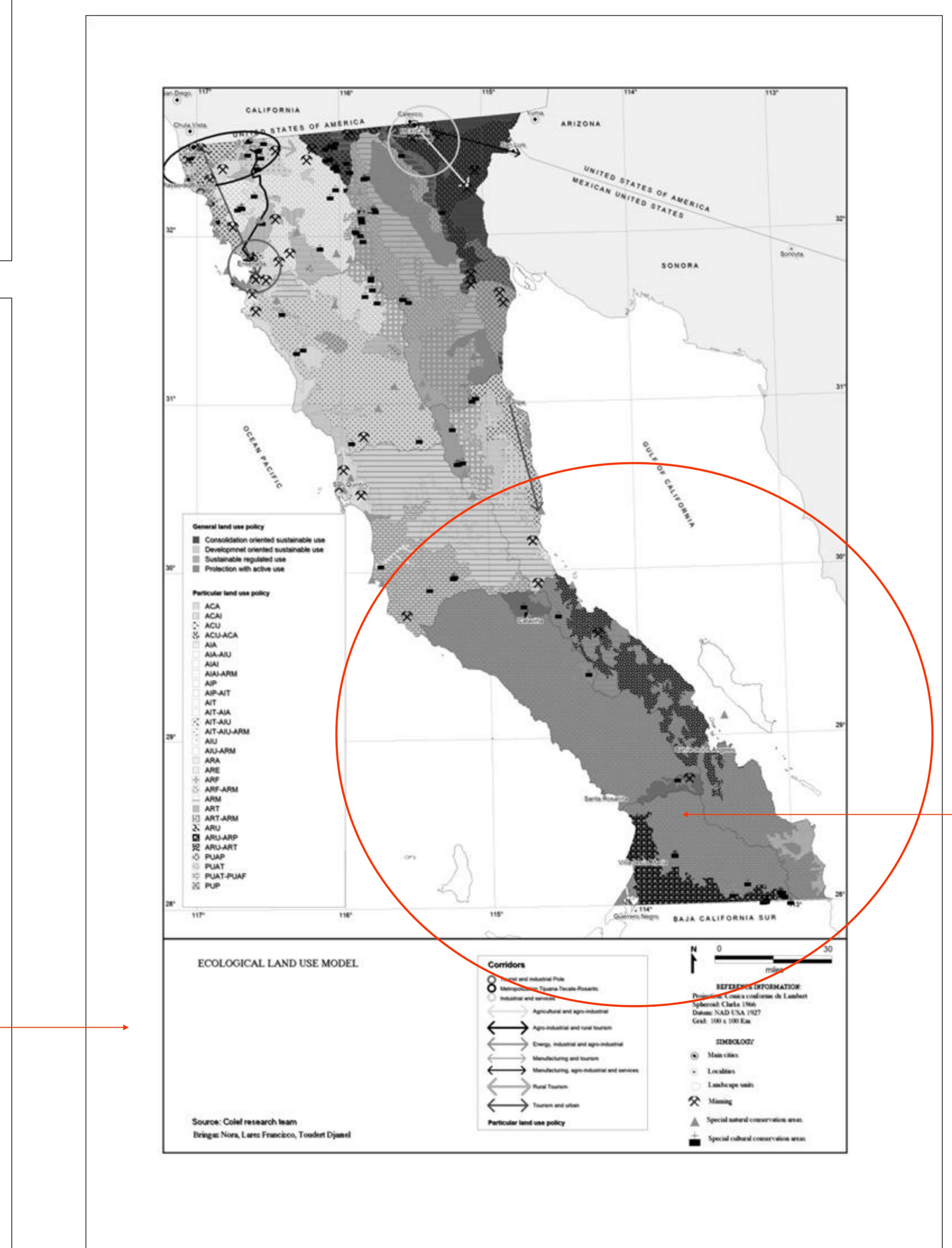
General land use policy	Land Surface Sq. KM.	Percentage (%)
Consolidation oriented sustainable use	13,527.09	18.94
Development oriented sustainable use	9,827.92	13.76
Sustainable regulated use	24,203.51	33.88
Protection with active use	23,875.59	33.42
Total	71,434.11	100.00

IMPORTANT FACTS

- 1/3 Of the State is designated protection with active use.
- There is another federal designation of a large proportion of the state as "protected area" which basically prohibits any use.
- The area is populated by small rural communities who have lived in the area before the designation.

CONSEQUENCES

- Communities disagree with the policy
- They feel pushed to abandon their land or live in poverty
- Large developers may take advantage of the few development possibilities.



MICRO EIA FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

- Use the EIA methodology for local projects in protected areas.
- Increase the role of public participation in EIA and tap on local knowledge
- Spend more time in local dialogue to create institutions people can live by.
- Adjust the type of mitigation measures and other recommendations to use participatory approaches for project implementation.